

kolsky met me at the door. "Do you know who ordered the armed demonstration for tomorrow?" he asked.

"Perhaps I did," I confessed.

"You gave the order in this hall," he replied, "but the same instruction was given in all the meetings. This seems to have been a planned action."

Military orders resounded in front of the University. Soldiers, in groups no larger than a platoon, were crossing the street and taking positions between the windows of the building, ready to break in. Then a group of officers approached the main entrance. One of them knocked on the door with the butt of his revolver and shouted, "Open!"

We swung the door wide open. The officers were surprised to see a group of students at the foot of the empty stairway.

"We are the Students' Council of the University," explained our chairman. "And who are you?"

"I am the commanding officer of the forces ordered to disperse the revolutionary meeting in the University," was the answer.

"There is no meeting here. Only the Council." The officer did not seem unhappy at finding no strangers in the building.

The councilmen remained at the University until dawn. I slept soundly on a table in the president's office. On the morning of October 16, the University was in the hands of the Military Governor of St. Petersburg, but St. Petersburg itself was in the hands of striking workers and their Soviet.

#### THE SOVIET OF WORKERS

To explain the origin of the Soviet (Council) of Workers, which played an important role in subsequent events and gave its name to a new kind of totalitarian regime after the revolution of November, 1917, I must go back a few days.

Memoirs and histories of the first Russian revolution have devoted a great deal of attention to this body but, because of their spirit of partisanship and self-interest, most of these accounts give a distorted picture of its true character. Actually, the St. Petersburg Soviet was nothing but an oversized strike committee. It neither organized nor directed the general strike of October, 1905, and it came to life only after the strike was in full swing. But its importance rose with the mounting tide of the strike, and it acquired a tremendous prestige after its end.

The strike had been spreading through St. Petersburg since the morning of October 12. Crowds of strikers roamed the city, persuad-